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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/WE AND NEA/I

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SUBJECT: SPAIN ENCOURAGES GREATER REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT WITH
IRAQ

REF: STATE 035471

¶1. Spanish MFA Deputy Director for Middle East Affairs, Alberto Ucelay, in response to reftel demarche, said that Spain also seeks greater regional engagement with Iraq. As the new Spanish cabinet is being formed this week, he was not able to share specific details about Spanish FM participation in upcoming conferences, but assured us that Spain would work for additional support for Iraq. Spain will also continue to fulfill its financial pledges.

¶2. The Spanish MFA reports that it disbursed 100 percent of the Madrid Conference Pledge, with the qualifying information that some concessional loans have not been finalized due to Iraqi capacity issues. The Spanish MFA said that specific project proposals for the concessional loans are pending at this time.

¶3. Spain also participates, through the EU initiative EUJUST LEX, in efforts to rebuild Iraqi capacity. In the second half of 2007 Spain trained 39 police officials, 20 prison officials and 25 judges. In March, Spain hosted a delegation of Iraqi electoral commission employees to learn about the Spanish general elections and democratic practices. There are plans to continue the programming in 2008.

¶4. With regard to Iraqi displaced persons, Spain contributed 800,000 euros to an EU program to alleviate the situation in Jordan and Syria.

AGUIRRE